

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A system, comprising:

register means;

means for processing a cryptographic certificate adapted to provide security

5 functionality; and,

means operatively connected to said register means and said processing

means for adjusting said register means to account for services when said

cryptographic certificate is processed

10 2. A system as defined in CLAIM 1 wherein said register means have funds stored therein and said means for adjusting debits funds stored in said register means when said cryptographic certificate is processed.

15 3. A system as defined in CLAIM 2 further comprising means for inhibiting processing of said cryptographic certificate when the funds stored in said register means are below a predetermined amount associated with processing said cryptographic certificate.

20 4. A system defined in CLAIM 2 wherein said means for processing a cryptographic certificate has cryptographic key means.

5. A system as defined in CLAIM 4 further comprising a secure housing, said means for processing a certificate are mounted within said secure housing.

5 6. A system as defined in CLAIM 5 wherein cryptographic key means includes a private key for use in a public key system.

7. A system as defined in CLAIM 6 wherein said cryptographic key means further includes a public key associated with said private key, said public key being signed with the private key of a certification authority and said public key being available to a user of the system.

8. A system as defined in CLAIM 7 further comprising communications means coupled to said means for processing a cryptographic certificate for providing means for communicating cryptographic key information for storage in said cryptographic key means.

9. A system as defined in CLAIM 8 wherein said means for communicating is mounted within said secure housing and provides a communication path from outside said secure housing to within said secure housing.

10. A system as defined in CLAIM 9 further comprising an input means coupled to said communications means for inputting data into said system.

11. A system as defined in CLAIM 10 wherein said input means is a personal computer means, said personal computer means including modem means for enabling communications with a remote location and enabling communications from said remote location to said communications means for entering data into said system from said remote location.

12. A system as defined in CLAIM 1 wherein said means for processing a cryptographic certificate includes means for generating a cryptographic certificate.

13. A system as defined in CLAIM 1 where said means for processing of a cryptographic certificate includes means for verifying a cryptographic certificate.

14. A system defined in CLAIM 1 wherein said means for processing cryptographic certificates includes key generator means.

15 A system as defined in CLAIM 2 further including recharging means coupled to said register means to enable funds stored in said register means to be remotely recharged with additional funds.

5 16. A system as defined in CLAIM 1 wherein said adjusting means includes a table of charges for a plurality of services capable of being provided when said cryptographic certificate is processed.

17. A system, comprising:

10 register means for storing funds;

means for processing a digital token providing proof of postage payment;

means for processing a cryptographic certificate adapted to provide security functionality; and,

15 means, operatively connected to said register means and to said means for processing a digital tokens and to said means for processing a certificate, for debiting funds stored in said register means when said digital token is processed and when said cryptographic certificate is processed.

18. A system as defined in CLAIM 17 further comprising means
20 operatively connected to said register means for inhibiting the processing of said digital token when the funds stored in said register means are below a predetermined amount associated with processing of said digital token and

for inhibiting processing of said cryptographic certificate when the funds stored in said register means are below a predetermined amount associated with processing said cryptographic certificate.

5 19. A system defined in CLAIM 17 wherein said means for processing a digital token has first cryptographic key means and said means for processing a cryptographic certificate has second cryptographic key means.

10 20. A system as defined in CLAIM 19 further comprising a secure housing, said means for processing a digital token and said means for processing a cryptographic certificate mounted within said secure housing.

15 21. A system as defined in CLAIM 20 wherein said first cryptographic key means includes a secret key for use in secret key encryption system and said second cryptographic key means includes a private key for use in a public key encryption system.

20 22. A system as defined in CLAIM 21 wherein said second cryptographic key means further includes a public key associated with said private key, said public key being signed with the private key of a certification authority.

23. A system as defined is CLAIM 22 further comprising communications means coupled to said means for processing a digital token and said means for processing a cryptographic certificate for providing a communications path for communicating cryptographic key information for storage in said first cryptographic key means and in said second cryptographic key means.

24. A system as defined in CLAIM 23 wherein said means for communicating is mounted within said secure housing and said communication path enables communications from outside said secure housing to within said secure housing.

25. A system as defined in CLAIM 24 further comprising an input means coupled to said communications means for inputting data into said system.

26. A system as defined in CLAIM 25 wherein said input means is a personal computer means, said personal computer means including modem means for enabling communications with a remote location and enabling communications from said remote location to said communications means for entering data into said system from said remote location.

27. A system as defined in CLAIM 17 wherein said means for processing a cryptographic certificate includes generating said cryptographic certificate.

28. A system as defined in CLAIM 17 where said processing of said cryptographic certificate comprises verifying said cryptographic certificate.

5 29. A system defined in CLAIM 17 further comprising a plurality of further means for processing cryptographic certificates.

30. A system as defined in CLAIM 17 further including recharging means coupled to said register means to enable funds stored in said register means
10 to be remotely recharged with additional funds.

31. A system as defined in CLAIM 17 wherein said means for processing a digital token includes generating said digital token.

15 32. A system, comprising:

register means;

means for processing a digital token providing proof of postage payment;

means for processing a cryptographic certificate adapted to provide security functionality; and,

20 means, operatively connected to said means for processing a digital token and to said means for processing a cryptographic certificate, for adjusting

said register means to account for services when said cryptographic certificate is processed and when said digital token is processed.

33. A method for use in a system having a register means, comprising:

5 register means;

processing a cryptographic certificate adapted to provide security functionality; and,

adjusting said register means to account for services when said cryptographic certificate is processed.

10 34. A method for use in a system having register means for storing funds, comprising:

processing a digital token providing proof of postage payment;

processing a cryptographic certificate adapted to provide security

15 functionality; and,

debiting funds stored in said register means when said digital token is processed and when said cryptographic certificate is processed.

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